

MRS. SANGER AS JAPAN SEES HER

It Calls Her "Sangai-san," Which Means "Destructive to Production," and There Are Whispered Rumors That Birth Control and Mrs. Sanger's Visit Are but an American Plot to Decrease the Population of Nippon So That the Island Empire May Be Grabbed by Uncle Sam

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Cartoon by ALBERT LEVERING

TOKIO.

WITH more than the usual amount of wit displayed by them the Japanese policemen are calling Mrs. Sanger "Sangai-san."

Sangai is a Japanese word which may be interpreted to mean "destructive to production." This is just one evidence of the extent to which Mrs. Sanger is being discussed in Japan to-day.

Perhaps the futility of attempts to repress ideas by government edict has never been so conclusively proved as in Japan during the last few weeks. As I write Mrs. Sanger is still in Tokio. While officially restrained from making public speeches concerning birth control, I suspect that there are more people in Japan to-day talking and thinking and knowing about this subject than there have ever been before or than would ever have been had Mrs. Sanger been permitted to land in Yokohama without any fuss. As it is, she is just now the big story of Japan. She is the most talked-of person. The day she and Admiral Baron Kato, returned conference delegate, arrived the baron's pictures were crowded into out-of-the-way corners of the Japanese papers by large photographs of Mrs. Sanger and her son Grant. No group can come together, whether foreign or Japanese, in which she and her theories are not the subject of the conversation, which is often an argument.

The attempt to repress Mrs. Sanger has acted as a boomerang. She is far more interesting than she ever would have been had she been allowed to go about without protest making speeches on birth control. Young Japan is in the mood just at present to approve anything the government condemns. The government thought Mrs. Sanger would introduce "dangerous thoughts." "Dangerous thoughts" are the breath of life to Young

Japan. Consequently when it was announced that the consul at San Francisco had refused to vize Mrs. Sanger's passport, then that she would not be permitted to enter Japan and subsequently that if allowed to enter she would not be granted permission to speak, Young Japan decided that Mrs. Sanger must be interesting. And from one end of the little empire to the other, wherever there are newspapers, it's a pretty safe bet that Mrs. Sanger and her theories are being discussed.

Police Prohibitions Help More Than Lectures

Mrs. Sanger was invited by the "Kaizo" (Reconstruction) magazine to come to Japan. While here she is the guest of Baron and Baroness Ishimoto, who are leading spirits in Japan's group of intelligent liberals. One of the first things Baron Ishimoto said to Mrs. Sanger after she finally landed at Yokohama was that so far as the birth control movement in Japan is concerned far more had been accomplished by the agitation growing out of police prohibitions than could ever have come through simple lectures on the subject. It is true. The news and editorial columns of both Japanese and foreign newspapers have been full of Mrs. Sanger ever since it was announced several weeks ago that she would come. By no means has all the comment been favorable, however. There has been a great deal of bitter criticism of Mrs. Sanger and much applause for the bold stand of the police authorities. But the main fact, and the one which must please Baron Ishimoto and

his group, is that Mrs. Sanger's as well as all other theories of birth control are being and will continue to be discussed in Japan.

Japan watches America very closely now, just as she does all nations since she has attained national maturity. Perhaps, like almost any other youngster lately grown past the gawky stage and attending her first grown-up party, she isn't just sure which fork to use or what to do with the finger bowl. So she watches the other guests. It is easy to see what she would learn concerning birth control by observation of American manners. The head of the police bureau of the Home Office is said to have been in New York at the time Mrs. Sanger's meeting was raided in the Town Hall. In order to prevent any such disturbance in Japan he simply announced that she could not make any speeches. This same cautious observation of America's attitude is



itual advancement. In short, the theory of birth control treats mankind like animals. It disregards the fact that the value of human beings is that the spirit can control the body, and it is an attempt to make man surrender to the sexual desire. It is reported that there are a million to two million cases of abortion annually in America. Everybody knows that abortion endangers the life of the mother and is a criminal act. If a method be allowed by which the criminal instinct can be satisfied without involving suffering or crime, to what extent would the abuse of sex be indulged in?"

Another "Chuo" editorial says (and this must also sound familiar to 100 per cent American ears):

"Our authorities may well demand Mrs. Sanger to be silent in her views, considering that what she propagates has a strong leaning toward socialism, and birth control itself undermines the foundation of our society."

The "Jiji," an enterprising and popular newspaper with liberal tendencies, said, in part, in one of its editorials:

Tokio "Jiji" Comes Out For Plain Speaking

"The present state of things in this country is that, whenever somewhat novel or progressive ideas and views are introduced into it, they are taken indiscriminately as dangerous and extreme ones, and are placed under strict oppression and even immediate suppression by force. The loss sustained by the nation through such irrational obstruction of the rise of thoughts and advancement of civilization is incalculably great. It is a case in point that the attitude taken by our authorities regarding the visit of Mrs. Sanger has exceeded the bounds of common sense in some measure. At first they forbade the landing of the lady in this country, and, although later they gave permission to her for a stay here, she has since been absolutely prohibited from delivering lectures or making propaganda pertaining to birth control. Perhaps the authorities have good reasons for so doing, but their actions seem to us far from reasonable. We do not know how weighty the lady's views on birth control are. Still the question is one which should be studied and discussed seriously for the sake of the future welfare of society and mankind in general. Wherefore we, one of the civilized peoples of the world, rather ought to let Mrs. Sanger speak out what she considers on the question to her heart's content and pass our fair judgment thereon. . . . From these considerations we deem the attitude of our authorities anything but appropriate and rational."

And as usual in such affairs there are numerous amusing bits of misinformation circulating. There seemed to be considerable surprise at the physical appearance of Mrs. Sanger when she arrived. Her apparent harmlessness was something of a shock. Several papers commented upon the "quiet and ladylike tone of her voice." One story has it that Mrs. Sanger is being sent to Japan by the American government to decrease the population of Japan so that later America may more easily step in and grab the Island Empire. Which must certainly amuse Mrs. Sanger as well as the American government. Another story has it authoritatively that Mrs. Sanger is really hand in glove with the Catholic Church, and that the recent outburst in New York was staged by them jointly for advertising purposes.

And through it all Margaret Sanger, quiet and vivid, interested, alert, asking quick, intelligent questions about industrial and economic conditions in Japan, smiles whimsically and says: "Yes, it is rather funny, isn't it?"

nouncement would simply have been made that the lady would not be allowed to land, and there the matter would have ended. And when the Taiyo Maru docked at Yokohama Mrs. Sanger would have remained peacefully in her cabin until the boat proceeded on its way to Hongkong or other ports of destination.

In 1922, however, the proceeding is a little different. It is announced that Mrs. Sanger cannot land. All sorts of a hornets' nest comes down on the heads of the officials. The younger men in the Home and Foreign offices protest. Editorials regret the high-handed procedure. The foreign papers are frankly amused and critical. So it is announced that she may land if she will conduct herself with proper dignity and promise not to talk while she is here. Still further protests. Oh, very well then, she may talk, but not publicly, and under no conditions concerning birth control. Continued amusement on the part of the press and vociferous objections from Young Japan. All right. She may speak publicly if she wishes, but not on birth control. No indeed! And it ends with her giving a few private talks on the subject and several entirely frank and scientific discussions with the physicians.

Public Opinion, as Elsewhere, Is the Highest Court

There are numerous stories as to where the responsibility for the many restrictions should be placed. Each person you meet takes you aside and explains confidentially that he is sure that "So-and-So in Such-and-Such a bureau" is entirely responsible for the difficulties. It makes little difference who and where the stumbling blocks were. The significant thing is that the authorities were susceptible enough to public opinion to reverse their decisions several times. And Young Japan is jubilant over that.

There is an interesting and amusing similarity between the development of the movements in Japan and America. Here in the papers and magazines are the same defenses and objections that have been agitating the American press for the last ten years or more. One maiden lady in a Japanese Sunday supplement writes (and how familiar the lines must ring to those in America who have watched the movement there!):

"The birth control propaganda is liable to kill the continence which is necessary for spir-

shown in an editorial in "Chuo," a Japanese daily, which says, in part:

"We are confident that no government will allow us to carry on such propaganda for some time to come. Even in the United States, which takes pride in the freedom of the people in the expression of their views and opinions, she is looked upon as a sort of 'undesirable' person. Perhaps our authorities are taking the same view."

As it has developed in Tokio, Mrs. Sanger has really been permitted to address several groups, both Japanese and foreign. When a meeting has been designated "public" she has spoken on the general subject of "War and Population," religiously avoiding reference to such "dangerous thoughts" as birth control.

At a few private meetings she has spoken on the general aspects of her favorite subject, with plenty of plainclothes men present to see that she did not become too definite. And she has had two meetings with Tokio physicians (and will have more in other parts of Japan) at which the definitely scientific aspects of practical methods of birth control were discussed. And this, after all, I imagine, was the chief thing Mrs. Sanger wanted.

Official Japan Did Not Know Its Own Mind

To the observer of the trend of affairs in Japan perhaps the most significant phase of the Sanger episode has been the number of times official decisions concerning her have been reversed. It is probable that if Mrs. Sanger had essayed to make speeches on birth control ten years ago in Japan the an-